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Another potshot at the Warren Report

by IRVING S. FEFFER

Presumed Guilty by Howard Roffman (Barnes: $8.95)

This book is but another tap on the door of the once impregnable Warren Commission Report. The main thesis of the 23-year-old author is that the government lied and covered up the truth of that day in Dallas when John F. Kennedy was assassinated.

If we are to believe the author, Lee Harvey Oswald had nothing to do with the slaying of the President and was "framed" by persons who have yet to be brought to the bar of justice. In attempting to state his case, Roffman has amassed a sea of facts and figures that are put together much in the fashion of a term paper, replete with more than 100 footnotes and an equally massive bibliography. The reader may be bored with the awkward writing, yet cannot help but be impressed with the extensive research.

The particularly disturbing issues raised in "Presumed Guilty" have all been made before, namely: First, how did one bullet go through the neck of the President, then enter Gov. John Connally in the area of the armpit, travel and shatter the governor's fifth rib, taking with it 10 centimeters of bone, hit and break his wrist bone into seven or eight pieces and end up in the pristine, undamaged condition when recovered? The critics have often referred to this as the "magic bullet" with some experts saying no bullet could have inflicted that amount of damage and remain in the condition that Exhibit 399 of the Warren Report claims. Other experts say it is entirely possible for this to have happened; second, could Oswald have fired his weapon with the speed and accuracy required? There is a wide area of dispute on Oswald's proficiency with weapons; and, last, why have the reports of the spectographic and neutron activation analyses been withheld? These results might conclusively have shown whether bullet 399 and the fragments traced to Oswald's rifle were actually involved in the wounding of either victim.

I am not at all convinced that Roffman is right. However, many Americans feel that the Warren Commission Report did not answer all of the questions, and, based on this past week's Senate Committee report alone, the public is entitled to another look into all the facts and circumstances.

Feffer, an attorney who practices in Beverly Hills, has read all 26 volumes of the Warren Commission Report.